

VZCZCXYZ0000  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHTV #2662/01 2471005  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 041005Z SEP 07  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3100  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAHQA/HQ USAF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEADWD/DA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/CNO WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 2683  
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 9387  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 2768  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 3480  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 2713  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0709  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 3445  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0316  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0785  
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 7368  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 4807  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 9717  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 3873  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 5815  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 7823  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 002662

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA  
HQ USAF FOR XXXX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

-----  
SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
-----

Mideast

-----  
Key stories in the media:  
-----

Major media reported on President Bush's surprise visit to the Al  
Asad US base in Iraq on Monday.

On Sunday Ha'aretz reported that in recent conversations with

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and in a meeting last Monday

SIPDIS

with Palestinian PM Salam Fayyad, FM Tzipi Livni said that all of the parties would serve to benefit from reasonable expectations for the expected November summit.

All media reported that on Monday Palestinians fired seven rockets at the western Negev. The rockets caused no casualties, but one landed near a kindergarten while it was in use. Leading media reported that PM Ehud Olmert and other senior GOI officials warned that Islamic Jihad, which the officials said was responsible for the attacks, would pay a hefty price. Israel Radio reported that Ambassador to the UN Danny Gilleran filed an official complaint with the UN over the continued rocket attacks. He was quoted as saying that there was a limit to Israel's restraint, adding that he would speak to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and demand that the organization intervene. Yediot quoted Vice PM Haim Ramon as saying that Israel should tell Hamas that it will cut off power and water supply to the Gaza Strip for a couple of hours following every attack.

On Sunday Ha'aretz reported that Egypt has decided, for now, to turn down Israel's request to reprise its role in mediating the negotiations for abducted IDF soldier Gilad Shalit's release. Ha'aretz cited the belief of Egyptian officials that renewing talks with Hamas would reverse the recent slippage in the group's standing -- particularly if Israel releases Palestinian prisoners as part of a deal.

The media reported that on Sunday an interministerial committee discussed the issue of unauthorized settler outposts. On Monday Ha'aretz cited an argument that occurred on Sunday between Strategic Affairs Minister Avigdor Lieberman and FM Livni. While Lieberman said that "there are no illegal outposts," Livni replied: "There is a government commitment [to remove the outposts], so we have to remove them."

Major media reported that on Monday Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz warned PM Olmert not to make "irreversible concessions" in the peace plan being discussed with the Palestinians. Mofaz demanded a debate in the Kadima party to set "red lines" before November's international meeting in Washington. Internal Security Minister Avi Dichter also urged holding a debate in the party about the peace negotiations. "Our duty is to make sure the PA passes several stages before we can conduct peace talks with it," Ha'aretz quoted him as saying at a Kadima forum. Leading media reported that criticism of Olmert on this matter among Kadima members is growing.

The Jerusalem Post reported that 80,000 illegal weapons are believed to be in the hands of West Bank terrorists, according to the IDF's latest assessments of the ongoing power struggle between Hamas and Fatah. The newspaper quoted Israeli defense officials as saying that Hamas could pose a genuine threat to PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas's security forces.

Makor Rishon-Hatzofe quoted a senior Israeli defense source as saying on Monday that Syria's budgetary investment in shoring up its military is equal to its growth during the preceding eight to nine years.

All media reported that on Monday female Israeli tennis player Shahar Pe'er reached the quarterfinals of the US Open.

Major media reported that on Monday IDF Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi approved a multi-year, multi-dimensional procurement program for the IDF. If the political leadership approves the program, its implementation will begin early next year. The procurement program, code-named Tefen, includes advanced systems for all branches of the IDF but much of the emphasis is placed on equipping the ground forces while sustaining the right mix "to ensure that we are not preparing for the last war," as one senior officer was quoted as saying in Ha'aretz.

Ha'aretz and other media reported that Tony Blair, the Quartet's Mideast envoy, is returning to the region for the second time since he was appointed.

Ha'aretz reported that a plan to reduce the number of internal checkpoints by nearly 50 percent has been lying in the Defense Ministry's inbox for almost a year. Ha'aretz quoted US defense officials as saying that the program is in line with Israeli promises to boost Chairman Abbas's status. The program was prepared by a former Defense Ministry adviser on Palestinian Affairs, Haggai Alon.

Ha'aretz quoted Jordan's King Abdullah II as saying in an interview with the French daily Le Monde that Hamas takes orders from Iran.

Ha'aretz reported that on Monday PM Olmert and visiting Austrian Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer discussed the need to reduce tensions between Israel and Syria. On Monday EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana was quoted as saying on Sunday in an interview with Ha'aretz that he saw no reason for any forthcoming military conflict between Israel and Syria. On Sunday Maariv quoted an Israeli Foreign Ministry official, whose task involves maintaining Israeli-Russian relations, as saying: "Russia is definitely likely to profit from a war here." The official was further quoted as saying: "This is not the first time that the Russians have heated up the sector here in an attempt to impose their influence"

Makor Rishon-Hatzofe quoted jailed Fatah-Tanzim leader Marwan Barghouti as saying in an interview with Arab media that Fatah is to blame for Hamas's takeover of Gaza.

Ha'aretz ran a feature on Afif Safieh, the PLO's representative in Washington, who "maneuvers between political forces in the Jewish lobby, the PLO in the territories, and the PLO abroad to show Americans that a 'moderate Palestinian' exists."

On Sunday Yediot reported on an Israeli Internet site called "Israeli Terrorism" which gives advice on how to perpetrate acts of error against Arabs.

Leading media reported that on Monday Finance Ministry Accountant-General Yaron Zelekha asked State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss for protection against his four-year contract not being extended. The state comptroller is empowered to do so in cases when an employee has been harmed because he has complained that his employer (in this case, PM Olmert) or a fellow employee was guilty of corruption.

On Monday all media reported that on Sunday the police recommended that former finance minister Abraham Hirschson be indicted on charges of embezzlement.

On Monday Yediot reported that candidates from oligarch Arkady Gaidamak's Social Justice party will run for mayor or for seats on the municipal councils in the November 2008 local authority elections.

Lenny Ben-David, who was Israel's deputy chief of mission in Washington, wrote in Ha'aretz that convicted spy Jonathan Pollard could have been released seven years ago, between the November 2000 presidential elections and President George Bush's inauguration in January 2001, but that Israel failed to make the requisite moves.

On Monday Maariv reported that HRH Prince Edward will arrive on Wednesday for a three-day visit to Israel, during which he will attend a Jewish New Year banquet and place the last stone in the Peace Mosaic in Jerusalem, which bears the symbol of the dove and the inscription "ask for peace and pursue it." The prince will be the guest of the Israel Youth Prize movement.

-----  
Mideast  
-----

Summary:  
-----

Senior op-ed writer Akiva Eldar commented in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "The Americans have not learned the bitter lesson of the failure of the second Camp David summit and the Intifada that followed it: Peace summits are not child's play. They are like playing with fire."

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "The entire settlement debate must be put into its proper context. The obstacle to peace is not those who advocate Greater Israel, who have lost the debate here, but terrorism in the name of Greater Palestine, meaning the destruction of Israel."

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote on page one of the popular, pluralist Maariv: "Olmert's fate is going to be sealed soon.... Abu Mazen? He is in similar shape.... Everything is based on Olmert's gut feeling ... [and] on an aggregate of coincidences and circumstances."

#### Block Quotes:

##### II. "Expectations, Anyone?"

Senior op-ed writer Akiva Eldar commented in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (9/3): "President Bush demanded that Israel stop expanding settlements. He even demanded that it evacuate the illegal outposts -- a relatively new contribution to the list of euphemisms.... But mere statements are not enough. George W. Bush also said that Israel 'must reduce its presence in the territories.'

Or, to use less watered-down language, Israel must finally carry out its recycled promise to reduce the number of internal checkpoints in the West Bank. So he said it. Big deal. During his July 16 speech, Bush did not make do with general talk about a 'vision' and a 'political horizon.' He did not hesitate to relate to the 'core issues.' The President said that negotiations on borders, refugees, and Jerusalem must begin, and that the borders should be based on both the lines of the past and the reality of the present, with agreed changes. So he said it. What has happened since?" Fall (the general time for holding the international, or regional, conference or 'meeting') is nearing and there are still no invitations, no hall, no date, no guest list, and no agenda. Were it not for the fact that the US is the most powerful country in the world, and that this summit is meant to alter the regional balance of power between moderates and extremists, it would be possible to laugh.... The Americans have not learned the bitter lesson of the failure of the second Camp David summit and the Intifada that followed it: Peace summits are not child's play. They are like playing with fire."

##### II. "Line-Drawing for Peace"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (9/4): "Why should not the US and Europe, which support the two-state concept and oppose the maximalists, quietly rejoice at an internal Israeli agreement that acts to solidify the consensus in favor of retaining areas that no Israel government can concede and toward parting from areas that most Israelis regard as rightfully theirs but do not want to rule? Meanwhile, the entire settlement debate must be put into its proper context. The obstacle to peace is not those who advocate Greater Israel, who have lost the debate here, but terrorism in the name of Greater Palestine, meaning the destruction of Israel. It is on confronting the latter genocidal mindset, which is far from defeated and openly regards all of Israel as an illegal settlement, that the international community must focus if the hopes for peace are to be advanced."

##### III. "For Your Eyes Only"

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote on page one of the popular, pluralist Maariv (9/2): "Imagine Rabin, or Netanyahu, or Sharon or Barak sitting with the other side's elected leader for a series of meetings in which they try to formulate together the 'core principles' of resolution. What uproar would have broken out. How extensive the coverage would have been. How many journalists would have surrounded the event and how many cameras would have clicked around it. And now? It is met with indifference. The talks are secretive, barely make their way to the first pages of the

#### SIPDIS

newspaper, and sometimes fail to do even that.... The thing is that nobody seems to be taking seriously are the talks between Olmert and Abu Mazen. Both men's status is questionable. Two lame ducks quacking together? Let them quack as much as they like. Olmert's fate is going to be sealed soon. The High Court of Justice is to

hear petitions next week against the Winograd Commission. The court's ruling will have tremendous impact on the Prime Minister's political future. His public standing is shaky and, despite a certain recovery, it is hard to envision any radical change in the visible future. Abu Mazen? He is in similar shape. He has already announced that he will not seek office again (even though this is a reversible decision), he enjoys scant support, he lost Gaza, is fighting for the West Bank, knows that he will not be able to secure the support of his public on every aspect of the final status arrangement, knows that he cannot enforce law and order, that his chances of exterminating terrorism are about equal to George Bush's chances of putting Iraq in order. And still, the talks are being held. On various levels.... The problem is that these talks have no formal father. They are not regulated. They are not planned. Everything is based on Olmert's gut feeling, on his chemistry with Vice Prime Minister Haim Ramon, on an aggregate of coincidences and circumstances."

JONES